178 Since those remote times, the Burmese customary law has
671 developed naturally, side by side with the growth and development of Burmese society. The Burmese have no great national code of laws gathered and authorized by a powerful king, no great charter forced from an unwilling king, no great statute passed by a national assembly fighting against tyranny, but nonetheless the Burmese customary law shows a conception of justice and a love of personal liberty in which every Burmese must take pride.

671 To the Burmese, before the partial introduction of the
643 English legal system, law meant civil law. To them, civil law was purely customary, and besides custom, there could be no other source of law. The idea of legislation by a parliament or a congress, or by executive order of the king was unfamiliar to the Burmese. In English common law, the king could do no
[685 wrong, and thus he was above the law. But with the Burmese,
694] the king himself was not exempt from the operation of the civil law, and the king was often the defendant in civil suits, usually for wrongful seizure of land. Admittedly the king was above his subjects, and he had the right to levy taxes in service or in kind, but he was also under a duty to give protection to the people. To protect the people and to preserve the peace, the king must prevent wrong-doing and punish wrong-doers, and it was for the king to proclaim which acts were wrongs from the point of view of public peace. Thus, at the beginning of each reign, the king proclaimed his list of crimes, and the punishments he would mete out to those who were found guilty of those crimes.

671 The list of crimes varied with each king, but the usual
681 crimes were offenses against the state, murder, robbery, theft, rape, and serious defamation. The usual penalties were whipping, confinement in irons, maiming, banishment, and death, with or without forfeiture to the king's treasury of the of-
[684] fender's possessions. In the eighteenth century, adultery was added to the list of crimes, with the punishment of whipping for both the woman and her paramour, and proclamation of their guilt by beat of drums and gongs. In the nineteenth